

the body has been burned, they are presented with the 764
clothes and cooking-vessels of the deceased.

When a great man dies, such as the Gyalpo or any of 766
the Kahlons, his corpse is kept in the house for fifteen
or twenty days, while the assembled lamas read prayers
daily. The number of the lamas depends on the
means or pride of the relatives. The body is then
carried to the *Pur-khang*, or place of cremation, and
after being burned in a metal vessel, the ashes (*Pur-
thal*) are carefully collected and made into an image of
the deceased. A *Chhorten*, or pyramid, is erected on
the spot for the reception of an urn or funeral vessel
(*Pur-Gom*), in which the following articles are deposited
with the figure:—

1. Wheat, barley, rice, and peas.
2. Pearls, coral beads, turquoises.
3. Gold, silver, copper, iron (either in money or vessels).
4. Rolls of prayers and holy writings.
5. Pieces of the holy *Shúkpá*, or pencil-cedar, and of sandal-wood,
both white and red.

The body of the great lama is interred in a coffin
(*Pur-Gam*), dressed in the usual clothes, with the knees
brought up to the chin, and corded together in as small
a compass as possible, and in a sitting posture. Beside
the body are placed the deceased's plate and cup, his
rolls of prayers, his praying-cylinder, and all his religious
instruments, together with the grains, minerals, and
metals, usually deposited with royalty. To these are
added images of Shakyá Thúbba, Jámya, and Chanrazik,
and a figure of the lama himself. The coffin is deposited
in a *Chhorten*, before which, for some time, food and
water are offered daily, and a light is kept burning every
night.

164 villages in lower Ladakh too. Indian tradesmen who were traveling through had brought with them a malignant, typhus-like fever, to which many succumbed. Then the smallpox went through the land and claimed numerous victims. Like flies in late autumn people were dying. The villages, yes, even the individual houses of a village, barred themselves against each other. The well-to-do farmers had the lamas make large and small dosmo (string crosses and stars), in order to exorcise the disease-bringing demons. Everywhere on paths and roads one could see lying these magical objects, which were supposed to bar the way for these fiends; the poor laid down thorny twigs and hoped for the same protection from these. A magical piece of paper was much in demand, on which two human figures were pictured in block printing, tied with chains on hand and foot: the spirits of disease who are tied by magic. The magical formulas were printed in a circle, which occupies the center of the picture. The lamas did good business with these magical slips of paper.

751 Some of the smallpox sufferers were tended by their family in the house. But other families, driven by fear of contagion, took their sick members into the desert directly outside their village. There these poor wretches looked for scanty protection among the large scattered stone blocks against the scorching rays of the sun and the sandstone. Daily the relatives would bring their sick people a bowl of food and a jug of butter tea; they would place both at some distance on the ground, they would call out a brief greeting to the sick, and then depart hastily. This sick person, who still had sufficient strength, would then drag himself laboriously to the spot in order to get the food. But it often happened that at the call no answer was made anymore. The following day the bowl would then stand still untouched; the sick person no longer needed any nourishment, he had suffered the last. Then a few men of the ~~village~~ would come and would drag the corpse by a rope into the Indus and there leave it to the fish as a "burial." In the best case a paid lama would be present on the occasion, in order to read a very brief mass for the dead. Sometimes it happened that the corpse could not be found at first. Wolves had torn it apart and carried it off--"buried."

766 /186/ The Tibetans have no pang of conscience about this kind of "burial." It is quite customary, even, and it is considered as particularly meritorious for the deceased because in this way he feeds the hungry animals even in death, something which is credited to his

karma as a service which furthers his final release from the bonds of being and from suffering. 766●

Otherwise, too, there was much disease during this year. The Nardag (na-bdag), the "demon of disease," went around the country followed on its heels by T'selen, the messenger of the god of death, who carried off into the realm of the dead the human beings, man as well as woman, child as well as the aged, with his catching net. Many a one was struck by the Nardag with a violent and mysterious sickness which no doctor knew or could heal. 753

There was Roima from the P'arlap'ang house (p'ar-la-p'añ), literally "the thrown-out one." She suddenly fell sick, complained about pains in her abdomen and in her back, her limbs became stiff and ached, the shivering ague and fever set in, and at times the sick woman lay there as if dead. The Tibetan doctors and magicians were at their wit's end. All their remedies failed, and even the cause of the illness was obscured to them. Finally they apparently came closer to the solution, as the lamas thought. Again, Khampas, men from greater Tibet, had had a hand in the matter. Recently a company of these Tibetans, Nask'orpas (gnas-ak'or-pa), literally translated, "Circlers of holy places," that is, pilgrims who walk around holy places amid prayers, had traveled through the country and had also come to Kalatse. These people had shown all kinds of tricks: one of them was able to make his body rigid at will, and then he would stick a large needle through his cheeks, knives through the muscles of his arms and thighs, without feeling any pain or so much as bleeding; lying on the ground he had a companion knock a large stone into pieces with a heavy hammer on his bare chest; he would swallow the blade of a sword, and perform other tricks of a similar nature. The people went from house to house, performed their tricks, and offered for sale to the inhabitants turquoises and tile tea, as well as all kinds of secret remedies. In one or two houses the Nask'orpas had also offered for sale a peculiar medicine, which they had found out. 187. I showed inquiry and questioned that this or that villager lived at enmity with his neighbors. The people said that the Naskorpas had an eye for opportunities where they were able to offer such secret remedies and to find customers for them. It was a remedy which was designed to make an enemy sick, even if not to kill him outright. It consisted of pills which contain poisonous plant substances, as well as the "five unclean things" (162) which are 754 [789]

755 the lamas believed that she had really died. The p'as-pun (members of the tribe) were called in in order to pay their last respects to the "dead woman." Then, when after a few hours they wanted to raise her and put her into the prescribed crouching position, she suddenly opened her eyes; and within the next 14 days she gradually recuperated. The lamas said that their skurim was to thank for that. The Lhapa asserted that it had been his magic which had brought the dead woman back to life.

[764] For several weeks the god of death still continued to rage and reap a rich harvest in the land. Almost daily smoke went up from the cremating ovens in the Kalatse gorge. There were two leprous persons, as well, among the dead. First a woman died. Her corpse was thrown into the Indus by her husband. The corpse of a young boy was carried by his own father up the mountain for "burial." The corpses of leprous persons may not be burned; one is afraid of contagion through the smoke and the anger of the offended gods. Therefore the burial is left to the vultures and the fish.

761 Finally winter set in with cold and snow, early this time, and sickness and dying came to end. The agitated minds of the people gradually were set to rest. But painful gaps had been torn into their ranks. Even among the young the god of death had this time claimed his victims. It was their karma, said the lamas, the fault of the sins of earlier existences; and the lamas would cite an old saying: "Sickness, grief, and ill repute, these three are the fruit of earlier existences that has now ripened" (163).

163. In Tibetan the saying goes: nad dah sdug-bshal gtam
han gsum--shon las nam-par smin-pa yin.

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The Karma Matures

888 There now followed again some quiet years for the inhabitants of Lower Ladakh, years in which they were spared disease and want. During these years Namgyal was able to build another addition to his house and his property, in view of his growing family--another son had been born to him. Close to his house he constructed another, smaller house as property reserved for old people (164), for his parents

164. It is a custom in Tibet for the owner of a farmstead to build a small house (k'ah-hu) as a reservation for his aging

765 person into the meeting hall of the monastery. The dead person's relatives donate tea, soup, rice, and the like, to all the lamas; this is done five times. On this occasion the lamas wear the ornaments with the crown with the five leaves (on each leaf being the picture of one of the five Heavenly Buddhas), as well as other magical emblems and implements. The "gift offerer" (who has ordered the ceremony to be performed) is likewise dressed with the same magical ornaments; then the "charm of the little incense bottle," "the charm of the crown," "the charm of the thunderbolt," "the charm of the bell," and the "charm of the name" are carried out. After this magical ceremony has been completed, each of the lamas receives a gift of eight annas or more. The lamas of the higher ranks receive more than those of the lower orders.

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Other Ways of Burial

766 In Ladakh the Buddhists usually burn the corpses. The corpses of such (persons) as have died of contagious diseases (like small-pox, typhus, and others), are buried under ground. In Ladakh the corpses are not, as a rule, left for the birds of prey, the vultures, and ravens to consume, as they are in Central Tibet. When a person dies among the nomads of Rupchu and other upland plateaus, the people cover the dead man's face with a cloth at the spot where he died. The nomads (literally "tent people," re-bo-pa) leave the place and move to another. The corpse is then consumed by wolves, vultures, and by other animals (66).

66. Since the nomads have no fixed and settled dwelling places, they do not have any burial places either. For cremation of the corpses they do not have the wood on the treeless upland steppes. Among many Buddhists it is considered as a particularly meritorious service to leave the corpses to the wild animals for the latter to consume. By feeding these animals with their flesh, the deceased perform even in death a work of mercifulness towards them.

Restless Spirits--Endless Ceremonies

769 Sometimes the lamas or the onpos (perhaps also a "clairvoyant") find out that the soul of a departed person has not yet found a

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The wealthy take their children to the monastery to be named and pay a heavy fee, but the poor bring the *lama* to their homes, feed him and give him a small present of cash or grain.

The child to be named must be over a year old and may be as much as three years old.

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If a child die without being named, it is buried. If it dies after the naming ceremony, the Sacred Books are consulted as to the disposal of the body.

The naming ceremony is not considered to have any effect on the child's future.

Adoption.

a.—Where there is no son.

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If a land-owner have no son, but only a daughter, she is ordinarily married to a man ranking as an adopted son. This man must be a younger son and so able to leave his father's house. He is not in any way looked down on.

However, if the land-owner have a younger brother who would ordinarily be a *lama* he can object, because a son-in-law can only be taken into the house as heir with his consent, and he can claim to cohabit with the land-owner's wife and beget a son. Or, if the wife be old, he can marry another woman and try and get a son by her. If he does, the elder sonless brother is turned into the *khang chung*, and the *lama* takes possession of the *khang chhen*.

b.—Where there is no child.

If there is no child and no younger brother, or if the younger brother does not object, the land-owner adopts a married man of his own got, or he adopts a girl and finds a husband for her who is made his heir. If in this case, the younger brother objects he can be bought off with a field or a pony or money or some similar present.

c.—The adopted son.

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Once a man is adopted as a son, he cannot be set aside, but there can be no adoption if a real son exists. If, after adopting a son, a real son is born, the latter becomes a younger son, and has to become a *lama* or is given a field for maintenance, while the adopted son gets the main portion of the land. The real son cannot object.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

With Fate M.

Tibet: Disposal of the Dead.

Singh.

Disposal of the Dead by Mutilation in Spiti (W. Tibet). By Dr. Bhagwan Singh.

133 The district called Spiti is now under British administration, and forms a part of the
634 Kangra District in the Punjab. On all sides it is surrounded by the snowy ranges of the inner
Himalayas. The whole of this country lies on the banks of the Spiti river, which in turn is a tributary
of the Sutlej. The altitude of Spiti is from 9,000 feet to 14,000 feet above sea level.

779 About a century ago Spiti was a part of Central Tibet, since when it was annexed by the then
144 Raja of Kashmir, and subsequently taken over by the British Government. The inhabitants follow
177 the Buddhist faith as practised in Tibet, and are of Mongolian origin, with an admixture of Aryan
blood. Practically all their customs are derived from the usages of pure Tibetans.

764 I propose in this article to give an account of one special mode of disposing of the dead—disposal
by mutilation. As has been already stated by the Rev. Walter Ashoe, in his account of the disposal
of the dead in Tibet, there are four methods employed when disposing of the dead. They are
(1) Mutilation of the corpse by chopping it in pieces; (2) Cremation on a funeral pyre; (3) Burial in
the earth; and (4) Throwing the corpse into the water.

766 I was informed that whilst the corpses of laymen may be disposed of in any of the four ways
already mentioned, ecclesiastics are always cremated on a funeral oven made of stone or earth in the
form of a square. This applies especially to Spiti, for in other parts of Tibet both clergy and laymen
alike are cremated after death on a funeral pyre of logs.

764 The most propitious time for mutilating corpses is when the harvesting and winnowing operations
793 are performed, whilst at other seasons of the year the mode of disposal is determined by the lamas
(priests) who consult their religious books for the most auspicious method.

The site chosen for the mutilation ceremony is usually a good distance from the village. Here
again the lamas are consulted as to the most propitious position—whether it should be the north,
south, east, or west of the village.

000 During the month of August, 1932, I went on a medical tour to Spiti, and I was fortunate in visiting
a village where the mutilation ceremony was performed.

On August 26th I reached a village called Manay, situated on the right bank of the Spiti River.
On arrival there about midday, I was informed that a young man suffering from pains in the abdomen
had died early that morning.

On inquiry, the villagers told me that the day before my arrival the deceased went with some
people from the same village to repair a road running between Pow and Manay. Whilst lifting
a boulder which had obstructed the road, he felt slight pains in his belly, causing him to abandon his
work and proceed home. These pains increased in severity, followed by vomiting and acute
constipation. The pains were spasmodic, and localized in the region of the navel, and he was unable
to lie on his back, but remained in a sitting posture until his death.

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¹[See Source # 13 in AJ2 Tibet AJ2 -- Anky.]

The Crises of Life

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The date of the funeral has arrived, and the brother of the departed must carry his corpse from the temple into the street. If there is no brother, his wife, assisted by a *paspun*, does this duty. Here the body is placed into a kind of box, which any man may now carry on his back to the burning-ghats out in the desert. The procession is formed by relatives, friends and lamas. The body is placed into an oven made of mud-bricks, consisting merely of four walls with an opening at the bottom into which the firewood is placed. The corpse is consumed to the reading of holy books, clashing of cymbals, and blowing of the flageolet, while butter, rice, water and barley are thrown into the consuming fire to provide sustenance for the soul of the departed. The cortège then returns home, where the dead man's effects are given to the priests to reward them for their services. In the case of a woman, however, her ornaments go to her eldest daughter, if she has one; if not, the lamas may auction them and retain the money. Next morning a relative goes to inspect the ashes. If the footprints of a dog can be discerned in these, the deceased's soul will speedily be re-incarnated. Some of these ashes are then made into a small idol of Buddha or a tiny *Chorten* by mixing with clay, and these are placed inside some large *Chorten*. Should the dead man belong to some opulent family, his relatives, having ascertained what would be a propitious holy banner, will have one prepared and hung up in the family temple.

In Tibet proper the general method of disposing of the dead is to expose the body, which has first been dismembered, to the vultures, or throw it to the fishes, or bury it. Cremation is reserved for priests or those of high rank. Here, in Lesser Tibet, however, most corpses are burnt. But even in their burial rites, these folk are the "wrong way round," for when cremation is most expedient, they bury. Has a man or woman died of infectious disease, his body is committed to the ground, to be disinterred and cremated about a year later.

The Crises of Life

- 766 Two more exceptional methods of the disposal of the corpse remain. If a child dies, a brick is taken out of the living-room wall, its small body placed inside, and thus immured. A lama of high rank is said to be well salted first, and then placed inside a *Chorten*. This, however, has been vigorously denied.
- 763 To conclude this chapter perhaps we may recount the following amusing story of how the people of Kyclang tried unsuccessfully to cheat the King of Death. An old lady was near dissolution, and, wishing to save her from the dread potentate, her relatives made an effigy of her, taking scrupulous care that this should be her exact size, then dressed it up in her clothes. A proper mourning with much wailing was then instituted, after which the effigy was carried out to the desert for cremation with full ceremonies. A man was then told off to return to the village shouting, "This poor woman has now been dead nine days," for which service he was rewarded with a pair of grass shoes. But, alas ! Death saw through the fraud, and took the dame as well.